

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 07590 280823Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 /079 W
-----124064 281024Z /11

R 280821Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3132
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7590

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SCUL KS CH
SUBJ: APPARENT PRC FEELER TOWARD ROK

1. KIM SEONG-JIN, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE, TOLD ME DURING MY COURTESY CALL ON AUGUST 25 OF A POSSIBLE PRC FEELER TOWARD THE ROK CONCERNING SOUTH KOREA'S ARCHEOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES AT SIN AN TO RECOVER LARGE AMOUNTS OF ANCIENT CHINESE AND KOREAN ART OBJECTS FROM UNDERWATER. WHEN THE KOREAN FIND WAS FIRST PUBLICIZED, THE ROKG ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD BE HAPPY TO HAVE FOREIGN EXPERTS, INCLUDING THOSE FROM CHINA, VISIT THE SITE. THERE WAS NO PRC RESPONSE AT THE TIME, AND THE ROC PREEMPTIVELY INVOLVED ITSELF VERY EXTENSIVELY. RECENTLY, KIM SAID, THE ROK HAD LEARNED THROUGH A HONG KONG INTERMEDIARY THAT A PRC ARCHEOLOGIST DESIRED TO COME TO KOREA AND EXAMINE THE EXHIBITS. KIM WAS INTRIGUED BY THIS DEVELOPMENT EVEN THOUGH HE RECOGNIZED THAT IT MIGHT MELT AWAY.

2. IN RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION ABOUT WHAT HE MIGHT DO TO PURSUE THE CONTACT WITHOUT OFFENDING THE ROC, I SAID I COULD NOT GIVE HIM ANY ADVICE. I COMMENTED,
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HOWEVER, THAT THE EVENTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF TIES BETWEEN THE PRC AND THE ROK WAS DESIRABLE. IF THE PRC FEELER WAS AUTHORITATIVE, A ROKG REBUFF MIGHT DISCOURAGE THE PROCESS OF CONTACT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE WAS AN OBVIOUS PROBLEM WITH THE ROC.
GLEYSTEN

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NNN

Message Attributes

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